

RECOGNIZING CHARLES E.
"CHARLIE" WEATHERLY

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, on February 11, Mississippi State University named Charles E. "Charlie" Weatherly the 2005 National Alumnus of the Year. This is the highest honor that the MSU Alumni Association can bestow on a member and recognizes Charlie out of the nearly 100,000 alumni in the association.

I know of no one in the Mississippi State family more deserving for this award than Charlie Weatherly. He has devoted 43 years of his life to the university and it is my distinct pleasure to honor him for that service today.

Charlie graduated from Mississippi State College (now Mississippi State University) with a degree in industrial management in 1959. He was a star football player for the Bulldogs and active in campus activities. In 1962, he became the first full time field representative for the alumni association and served in this capacity until 1967, when he was appointed the association's executive secretary. In 1976, he was named Director of Alumni Affairs and served admirably in this position until 1986, when he became coordinator of special projects for both the Alumni Association and the MSU Foundation. Charlie was the prime fundraiser and coordinator for constructing the Eugene Butler Guest House, as well as serving as director of the first constituency based fund drive. Prior to retirement, he served as director of development for Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine and remains a member of the board of directors of the MSU Alumni Foundation, a scholarship assistance program for deserving MSU students.

Mr. Speaker, our university experiences educate and shape our lives for many years to come. They are not just sources of academic expansion but also economic engines for communities like Starkville and states like Mississippi. It is notable to give back in some capacity to an institution that provides an improved quality of life for so many. For Charlie Weatherly, this was not a one time gift or occasional favor, but a lifetime of service and commitment that continues today. I am proud that the Mississippi State University Alumni Association has so properly bestowed this honor on him.

TWO SIKHS ACQUITTED IN AIR INDIA CASE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to learn that this past Wednesday, two Sikhs named Ajaib Singh Bagri and Ripudaman Singh Malik, who were accused of carrying out the 1985 Air India bombing, were acquitted. These Sikhs were found innocent because the witnesses against them were not believable.

The Indian government has maintained for 20 years that the Sikhs were responsible for the Air India disaster and has used it as an

excuse to kill Sikhs and tighten the repression against them. Now it is clear that they were not responsible.

Why did India grant a loan of \$2 million to the main financial backer of the organization that carried out the bombing? Why did Indian operatives approach Lal Singh, offering him "2 million dollars and settlement in a nice country" if he would offer false testimony against the two accused Sikhs? Why did the Consul General of India in Toronto call in a detailed description of the disaster just hours later when it took the Canadian investigators weeks to find that information? How did he know so much? Why was the Consul General later expelled?

His successor as Consul General was quoted as saying that Sikhs who support Khalistan, the independent Sikh homeland, are terrorists, but the movement for Sikh independence is led by the Council of Khalistan, which is committed to achieving an independent Khalistan by peaceful, democratic, nonviolent means.

The book *Soft Target*, which is the definitive account of the Air India case, quotes a Canadian Security Investigative Service investigator as saying, "If you really want to clear the incidents quickly, take vans down to the Indian High Commission and the consulates in Toronto and Vancouver, load up everybody and take them down for questioning. We know it and they know it that they are involved." And the acquittal of the Sikhs accused just provides further substantiation of India's guilt.

Mr. Speaker, this country must not support terrorism. We cannot support the people who bombed the Air India airliner and killed 329 innocent people, especially at a time when we are fighting terrorism around the world. It is time to cut off all our aid and trade with India and support freedom and self-determination for all the nations struggling for their independence in South Asia. That is the best way to establish peace, freedom, security, and dignity for all in that troubled region of the world.

I would like to insert the press release on the acquittal of these two Sikhs from the Council of Khalistan into the RECORD, Mr. Speaker. I believe it will clearly show who is responsible for this terrible act of terrorism.

MALIK, BAGRI ACQUITTED OF ALL CHARGES IN AIR INDIA CASE

JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE DESPITE PRESSURE FROM INDIAN REGIME

WASHINGTON, DC, March 16, 2005. Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri have been acquitted of all charges in the Air India bombing case, in a major rebuke to the Indian regime. Malik and Bagri were found not guilty today in the deaths of 329 people who perished when Air India Flight 182 was brought down by a bomb on June 23, 1985 in Canada's worst case of mass murder. Justice Ian Josephson delivered the verdicts this afternoon, saying he didn't believe many of the witnesses.

"Justice has been done for these Sikhs," said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle for independence. "Despite the effort of the Indian government to blame these Sikhs for its own acts, they have been found innocent. This is a major setback for the Hindustani regime," he said. Canadian Member of Parliament wrote in 1989 that the Canadian government had spent \$60 million on the case. "On behalf of over 600,000 Sikhs in Canada and the 25 million Sikhs worldwide, we would like to express our gratitude to Judge Josephson for doing the right thing

and not caving in to the pressure of the Indian government," Dr. Aulakh said.

Air India flight 182 was blown up off Ireland in 1985. It was on its way from Toronto to Bombay. It was supposed to be blown up at the London airport when no passengers would be aboard, but due to delays it blew up over Ireland. The book *Soft Target* by Canadian journalists Zuhair Kashmeri of the Toronto Globe and Mail and Brian McAndrew of the Toronto Star exposed India's responsibility for this bombing. In the book, Kashmeri and McAndrew quoted a Canadian Security Investigative Service (CSIS) investigator as saying, "If you really want to clear the incidents quickly, take vans down to the Indian High Commission and the consulates in Toronto and Vancouver, load up everybody and take them down for questioning. We know it and they know it that they are involved."

The book shows that within hours after the flight was blown up, the Indian Consul General in Toronto, Surinder Malik (no relation to Ripudaman Singh Malik), called in a detailed description of the bombing and the names of those he said were involved, information that the Canadian government didn't discover until weeks later. Mr. Malik said to look on the passenger manifest for the name "L. Singh." This would turn out to be Lal Singh, who told the press that he was offered "two million dollars and settlement in a nice country" by the Indian regime to give false testimony in the case.

In his book *Betrayal: The Spy Canada Abandoned*, Member of Parliament David Kilgour wrote that Canadian-Polish double agent Ryszard Paszkowski was approached to join a plot to carry out a second bombing. The people who approached Paszkowski were connected to the Indian government.

The main backer of the group that was supposedly behind the Air India bombing had received a \$2 million loan from the State Bank of India just before the plane was attacked, according to *Soft Target*. The year after the bombing, three Indian consuls general were asked to leave the country. At the time of the bombing, the Congress Party needed the Sikhs as scapegoats to win votes on a law-and-order platform. The attack also served as justification for the government to shed more Sikh blood.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese,

Manipuris, Dalits, Bodos, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs and tens of thousands of other minorities are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! We demand the immediate release of all these political prisoners.

The Sikh Nation declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987 and formed the Council of Khalistan at that time to lead the struggle for independence. When India became independent, Sikhs were equal partners in the transfer of power and were to receive their own state, but the weak and ignorant Sikh leaders of the time were tricked into staying with India on the promise that they would have "the glow of freedom" and no law affecting the Sikhs would pass without their consent. Sikhs ruled an independent and sovereign Punjab from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849 and were recognized by most of the countries of the world at that time. Sikhs do not accept the Indian constitution. No Sikh representative has ever signed it.

V.P. Singh, who was the Indian Consul General in Toronto when Soft Target came out, was quoted in the June 22, 1989 issue of the Washington Times, as saying that Sikhs who support Khalistan are terrorists. The Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle to liberate Khalistan, openly repudiated militancy and has an 18-year record of working to free Khalistan by peaceful, democratic, nonviolent means.

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. Khaira was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khaira. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. He has never been tried for the Jathedar Kaunke murder. In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties for killing Sikhs.

Missionary Graham Staines was murdered along with his two sons, ages 8 and 10, by a mob of militant, fundamentalist Hindu nationalists who set fire to the jeep, surrounded it, and chanted "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. None of the people involved has been tried. The persons who have murdered priests, raped nuns, and burned Christian churches have not been charged or tried. The murderers of 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat have never been brought to trial. An Indian newspaper reported that the police were ordered not to get involved in that massacre, a frightening parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in 1984.

India is not one country; it is a polyglot thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. Last year, the Punjab Legislative Assembly passed a bill cancelling the government's daylight robbery of Punjab river water. The Assembly explicitly stated the sovereignty of Punjab.

"The Indian regime stands exposed for the bloody tyranny that it is," said Dr. Aulakh. "This verdict is a major setback to their repressive drive for hegemony over all of South Asia," he said. "This is a victory not only for the Sikh Nation, but for freedom-loving people everywhere."

"I urge the international community to help us free Khalistan from Indian occupation," Dr. Aulakh said. "Freedom is the birthright of all people and nations," he said. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh'." Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. A sovereign Khalistan is essential for the survival of the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation."

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ATASCOSA COUNTY COMMISSIONER FREDDIE OGDEN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Atascosa County Commissioner

Freddie Ogden for his dedicated service to the people of Texas.

Mr. Ogden was born in Poteet, TX, in 1950. He attended Poteet High School, and began his career in public service soon after, working for Atascosa County Precinct 2 as a motor grader operator. Beginning in 1975, he worked for the Atascosa County Sheriff's Office, and in 1976, he graduated from the Alamo Area Law Enforcement Academy and became Police Chief for the city of Poteet.

While continuing his career as a law enforcement officer, Freddie Ogden also married Danna Roby, moved to Charlotte, TX, and raised two sons, one of whom has continued the family tradition of law enforcement as a corrections officer. Mr. Ogden began working for the Atascosa County Sheriff's Office in 1978, and was promoted to Assistant Chief Deputy and Chief Deputy Sheriff in 1982 and 1984. He was recognized for his extraordinary service, winning Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in 1985.

Mr. Ogden was rewarded for his service with an appointment as County Commissioner of Atascosa Precinct 3, a post which he still holds. He further contributes to the public good through his work as a volunteer deputy for the Atascosa County Sheriff.

Mr. Speaker, Freddie Ogden remains a tireless public servant, and I applaud his energy, competence, and dedication.

HONORING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATHENS ROTARY CLUB

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to commemorate two significant anniversaries of Rotary International. On February 23, 2005, Rotary International celebrated its 100th anniversary. From its humble roots in Chicago, Illinois, Rotary International has grown into a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders whose mission is to provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. Since 1943, Rotary International has distributed more than \$1.1 billion to combat polio, promote cultural exchanges, and encourage community service.

I also want to provide special recognition to an important member of this outstanding organization, the Rotary Club of Athens, Texas, on the occasion of their 75th anniversary on December 1, 2004. Throughout its seventy-five year history, the Athens Rotary Club has achieved great successes in carrying out the mission of Rotary International.

In past years, the Athens Rotary Club has raised money to combat Polio, provided scholarships to two seniors from each high school in Henderson County, and sponsored exchange students from around the world. In addition, the club is active with the Boy Scouts of America, the Henderson County 4H club, the YMCA, the local Food Pantry, and numerous other charitable and civic organizations in and around Athens, Texas.

Through these actions, the Rotary Club of Athens, Texas, has exemplified the values of service and charity that lie at the heart of American society. As the congressional representative of the members of this outstanding organization, it is my distinct pleasure to be able to honor them today on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

IN RECOGNITION OF ELAINE GROTHMANN FOR HER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career accomplishments of Elaine Grothmann for her 30 years of service to the Contra Costa County Department of Employment and Human Services.

Ms. Grothmann represents the highest standards of professionalism in her life work with the Department. She is respected and trusted by her colleagues for her sincerity, constancy, and the outstanding quality of her work. Her managers know that when Elaine takes on an assignment, the end product is going to be assured, timely, and a credit to the Department.

Over her career, Elaine's work has benefited a wide range of the Department's customers, including dependent children, refugees, foster children, and parents entering and reentering the job market after having received welfare. She has been an innovator and mainstay of programs for CalWORKs participants, creating and implementing services in child care, substance abuse, mental health, and learning disabilities that buoy employability. The training program she spearheaded for CalWORKs participants to become licensed child care providers and preschool teachers is an inspired, lasting design that continues to meet multiple, compatible needs of the participants.

Elaine's respect for those who are served by the Department shows in her work on their behalf and confers respect on the Department. Her creativity, expertise, dedication, and amiability—not to mention her affinity for good times and monthly trips to Disneyland—are going to be missed by everyone who has worked with Elaine and benefited from her good work.

I thank Elaine Grothmann for her career contributions to the Contra Costa County Department of Employment and Human Services, and I wish her a well-deserved retirement in the community she has done so much to improve.